



Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2003
Wisconsin Rapids City Council Chambers
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

LRSC MEMBERS PRESENT

Wisconsin Counties Association

Dick Leffler - Florence County
Emmer Shields - Ashland County
Ed Brown - Juneau County
Chet Zurawik - Milwaukee County

Wisconsin Towns Association

Gene Lueck – Bloomer
Arlyn Helm - Springbrook-Washburn
Norm Faber – Ithaca-Richland
LaVerne Grunwald - Caledonia-Waupaca

League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Dave Waffle – Reedsburg
Dennis Melvin – West Bend
Bill Beil, Jr. – Abbottsford

Wisconsin Alliance of Cities

Jeff Mantes for Jeff Polenske
Paula Vandehey – Appleton

**Regional Planning Commissions/
Metropolitan Planning Organizations**

Walt Raith – ECWRPC
Don Kush – WCWRPC
Ken Yunker - SEWRPC

WisDOT STAFF PRESENT

Mary Forlenza
Steve Coons
Scott Bush
Jim Donlin
Joe Nestler
Kelly Schieldt
Mary Jo Trapani-Collins

Others Present

Dave Siebert – DNR
Todd Pierce – TDA
Marv Sampson - WTA
Larry Shiman - Opinion Dynamics
Tracey McKenney - FHWA
Ron Rutkowski – Milwaukee Co.
Mike Hess

LRSC MEMBERS EXCUSED

David Botts - Beloit (WAC)
Bill Handlos - Manitowoc (LWM)
Rick Jones – Racine (WAC)

Opening Business (Don Kush, Mary Forlenza)

Don Kush called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Mary Forlenza took roll call. Minutes from March 5, 2003 were reviewed and accepted as written.

A plaque of recognition was presented to LaVerne Grunwald, who is retiring from the council. The Secretary acknowledged LaVerne as an original member of the LRSC and the department's appreciation for his valuable contributions.

Don also welcomed the new members of the Local Roads and Streets Council, including:

- **Bill Beil, Jr.**, Public Works Director from the City of Abbottsford, representing the League of Wisconsin Municipalities
- **David Botts**, Public Works Director from the City of Beloit, representing the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities
- **Paula Vandehey**, Public Works Director from the City of Appleton, also representing the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities.

Tracey McKenney was introduced as the FHWA replacement for Phil Barnes. She will be attending council activities, and will also be the FHWA representative on the WisDOT Secretary's Committee on Local Program Streamlining (SCOLPS).

Local Roads Communication Analysis- Council on Research Final Report (Larry Shiman, Opinion Dynamics)

Larry provided the council with an overview of the project (see attached presentation). Dave W. asked where we go from here. Mary indicated that the findings help the department with the upcoming pavement rating process, since WisDOT will have less resources for this effort than in 2001. She also stressed that the information will be available to assist not only the WisDOT business areas that work directly with locals, but for all WisDOT business areas when designing future communication efforts. The research noted past gaps in communication campaigns, such as effectively reaching villages, and recommends modifications such as working with the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and directly with village clerks.

While the compliance rate for pavement ratings in December 2001 was astounding given the initial submittal and no incentives or penalties, Don anticipates ambivalence by local governments for the December 2003 pavement rating deadline. He noted that the touted benefit of access to the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) has not been realized since the pavement ratings and On/At information are still not available. Chet said that small communities rely more on counties for assistance with pavement ratings. Don said that many counties have a working relationship with the towns and some counties rated town roads for them. Larry reiterated the importance of local and regional meetings to share information. Gene added that WISLR was complicated and not all pavement ratings have been entered into the system. The *WTA Monthly Newsletter* also was an effective way to communicate with the towns.

Mary said that the report would be finalized this summer and presented to WisDOT's Council on Research (COR). There will be discussion with COR as to the best way to share the research findings, particularly within WisDOT.

Wisconsin Biennial Budget & Transportation (Jim Donlin, WisDOT)

Jim went over the following programs and budget items:

General Transportation Aids – The Governor proposed 2.5% inflationary increases in each year yet overall funding and the rate per mile were frozen at CY 2003 amounts for both CY 2004 and CY 2005. The GTA formula, though, was not frozen.

Local Roads Improvement Program – The Governor proposed 2.5% inflationary increases in each year yet entitlement funding was cut by \$1,275,500 each year. Discretionary program dollars remained at CY 2003 levels. The threshold for requiring an engineering certification by a registered professional engineer was increased from \$50,000 to \$65,000 in total project costs.

Federal Funding Reductions – Local roads (STP-Urban, STP-Rural and Local Bridge) were cut \$14 million, Local Bridge was cut \$4.8 million, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality was reduced \$2.3 million and enhancement grants were cut by \$1.2 million. The State Planning and Research program was cut by \$6.5 million, reducing planning activities at WisDOT along with reducing assistance to Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Commissions.

Two programs, the STP/Discretionary program (\$2.7 million in 2003) and multimodal studies (\$750,000/year) were eliminated.

Maintenance – The Governor proposed inflationary and system growth increases of \$18.8 million over the biennium and changing the definition of maintenance back to the pre-2001-03 budget terms. Funding was reduced \$7.4 million each year from the CY 2003 base and the definitions were unchanged, resulting in approximately \$50 million shortfall in funding versus needs over the biennium.

Traffic Marking Enhancement Grants – This new program was created to provide grants to local governments for improving signage and pavement marking visibility for elderly drivers and pedestrians. The funding level is to be determined based on federal funding received for the 0.08 blood alcohol content incentives in 2004 and overall federal funding in 2005.

Chet asked if there was any data to analyze if Milwaukee County gets its fair share of transportation revenues. Jim said that a study conducted in the mid-1980's indicated that the county did well. He noted that a critical item to analyze, current fuel collection data, is not easily split by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

In regard to the cuts in the STP/Urban, STP/Rural and Local Bridge programs, Mary said that the 2005-07 cycle is currently under development and approvals for the 2004-05 cycle occurred two years ago assumed a higher funding level than was ultimately provided in the budget. Worst case, these reductions could delay delivery of already approved 2004-05

projects. However, since the programs see enough delays in the delivery of projects from when they are originally scheduled due to typical project development and delivery issues, the department is not overly concerned this will be a problem. The reduction in program levels will be handled as part of the funding cut-off for this summer's 2005-2007 program approvals. Mary added that the department was also weighing options for how to handle already approved STP/Discretionary projects. In answering Emmer's question, it was noted that the reductions have been redirected to the majors program, the rehabilitation program, and the Marquette Interchange.

Don asked what FHWA's position was on the cuts in state planning and research dollars given the requirement to update long range transportation plans. Jim added that traffic counting and future program eligibility may be impacted by the cuts. Don added that local match funds are being reduced too and magnifies the funding challenges.

It was noted that the cuts in maintenance may be revisited if the state has a bad winter snow season. Emmer added that it seems like the legislative message is to get counties out of the maintenance business and privatize the service. Chet added that counties provide a good level of service if you look at it with a level playing field. Jim added that the Kettl Commission lauded the intergovernmental coordination on county-provided maintenance for the state trunk highway system.

Jim added that the Governor and the WisDOT Secretary are concerned about the impacts from the budget cuts, and Emmer said that a request for additional funding lost along party lines. Jim noted that most of the cuts identified are not vetoable based on the budget language and that the Governor can write numbers down but cannot return them to their 2003 base. Dick added that the budget is taking funds from local communities and also taking away their ability to generate local funds. Jim summarized the budget discussion with a graph showing long term investments in various transportation sectors. Dennis asked that Jim provide this graph to the council members and associations (see attachment).

2004-05 Local Roads Improvement Program (Scott Bush)

Scott provided an overview on the upcoming program cycle for LRIP (see attachment). Dick said that LRIP is a popular program with local governments. Emmer said that the proposed changes to the program will help county highway commissioners as administrators of the program at the local level. LaVerne added that the Wisconsin Towns Association supports the programming caps proposed for the next cycle.

Local Federal Transportation Programs: 2005-2007 (Steve Coons)

Steve provided an update on the 2005-07 federal programs (see attachment). In response to a question by Chet, Steve indicated that the identified funding levels are subject to change and would require legislative approval.

Pavement Rating/WISLR Update (Joe Nestler, Kelly Schieldt and Mary Jo Trapani-Collins)

Joe, Kelly and Mary Jo provided an update on the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) and the upcoming pavement rating process (see attachment). Joe highlighted that the first business cycle has been completed using WISLR to certify mileage.

Don asked about the distinction between using a printer and a plotter with WISLR. Kelly said that you could use a printer to print 8-1/2"x11" CVT maps, but you would need a large format plotter to print large maps. WisDOT is looking for counties to potentially assist other communities if they need a plotter. In regard to a question by Gene, Kelly said that other than for a few large cities, a CVT map is on one map.

Mary Jo asked for feedback on the WISLR manual that was handed out at the meeting.

In regard to a question by Don, Joe indicated that the manual will be placed on the WisDOT website, but no mass mailing of the manuals is planned at this time.

Dennis asked if you could use WISLR to analyze other community's data. Joe said that they are reviewing WISLR to see if they can provide statewide, regional and county snapshots. Dennis asked if communities over 20,000 in population could be reviewed. Joe said that WISLR stores population figures, but that the data is behind the scenes and can't be edited.

Marv suggested that standard reports could be run by WISLR at night so that the system wouldn't be slowed down during business hours.

Walt asked if the new urban areas, new urbanized area boundaries and changes to functional classification would be delineated in WISLR. Kelly said that the WisDOT Bureau of Planning is looking at the functional classification changes and that the WisDOT Division of Districts is working with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations on the boundaries.

In response to a question by Dave W., Joe said that they will be working with the UW-Transportation Information Center on the default cost table and average unit costs. The cost table will also be able to be customized to fit a local governments situation. TIC will be surveying a sample of locals to get this information. Paula indicated that Steve Pudloski of UW-TIC had recently contacted them, and that Appleton has a long history of keeping this information.

Emmer asked if locals could change the pavement ratings in WISLR to meet the upcoming pavement rating deadline. Joe said that this is not possible for the 2003 cycle since WISLR training classes won't be available until after the December 15 deadline. Marv suggested that locals put a rating date into WISLR along with the editor's name.

Gene asked about archiving historic pavement rating data, and Kelly said that nothing before 2001 may be available through WISLR.

In response to a question by Mary, Joe said he is confident that Paserware v3.0 will be available in September.

Paula asked what the timeframe was for the functionality that will be “coming soon” and Joe estimated the end of August. Paula recommended stressing the upcoming benefits in future WISLR communications.

Joe said that about 85% of the pavement data has been loaded into WISLR and requested council assistance in supporting the upcoming pavement rating cycle. He said that a WISLR letter will be sent to local communities in August and a reminder letter on the pavement ratings will be mailed in September. He will also use the *WTA Monthly Newsletter* and the WCHA quarterly newsletter *Roadworks* to announce these activities.

Don said that WisDOT promised access to something that still isn’t available and WISLR needs definitive timelines. Joe said that loading data has been delayed because people changed road names on the pavement rating submittals or didn’t have correct On/At location identifiers. Mary added that the 2004-05 cycle for the Local Roads Improvement Program will require On/At to describe the location of projects. In response to a question by Dave W., Joe indicated that the On/At Manual will be on the WISLR website (<https://trust.dot.state.wi.us/wislr/NavigationDispatch>) and Scott added that the manual will also be on the LRIP website (<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/lrip.htm>).

Don congratulated Joe on his appointment to be the Chief of the WisDOT Program Development and Analysis Section that was vacant with the appointment of Mark Wolfgram to WisDOT Administrator of the Division of Transportation Investment Management. Joe indicated that he will stay with the WISLR project as long as he is need and until his replacement has been trained.

Report on March 25th Conference – “Transportation & the Environment: Promoting and Protecting the Public Interest” (Emmer Shields)

Emmer gave an update on the March conference (see attachment). Emmer stated that Dave Siebert from the DNR has been instrumental in this effort and recognized the past activities of the LRSC Delivery Cost Study Group. He reviewed the work of the LRSC REAL Committee to brainstorm issues and frame the workshop process. Emmer said that there was a good cross section of participants at the conference and it was a high profile event with the WisDOT and DNR Secretary in attendance along with the FHWA Administrator.

Emmer said there were two main recommendations coming out of the conference – a single point of contact at DNR and the need for an education process. He said that a final report needs to be completed along with working with DNR to implement the recommendations. Emmer said that DNR management needs to understand the value of these proposals and he feels optimistic that the conference will produce real change. Walt asked if the group recognizes the different transportation project issues versus subdivision

erosion control issues. The focus of this effort was on roadway reconstruction projects and not on urban sprawl or new construction issues.

Dave Siebert provided a short summary of the conference from his perspective. He surveyed DNR field staff to get their input on identifying issues early on in the process and found confusion about roles and regulations. He summed up by saying its about the outcomes, not the paper. He noted that the conference got buy-in on the issues by people beyond just the LRSC.

Dave S. said that the letter from the DNR Secretary supporting the single point of contact is the first step in implementing this new measure. He said a list of DNR contacts will be distributed to local governments along with DOT staff contacts. LaVerne asked about the timeline for these changes and Emmer noted that this will require some reorganization and internal commitments by DNR.

Don commented that with the budget crisis now is a good time to reach for these efficiencies. Dave S. indicated that he is unclear about the best time to implement these changes, but the conference was the first step in working forward on the issues. In response to a question by Dave W., Mary indicated that the conference summary was provided to all conference participants. Emmer said that the two recommendations will be the focus for the REAL Committee, along with a few other items.

Oversize/Overweight Vehicle Issues (Emmer Shields)

Emmer mentioned that he testified at a recent legislative hearing on weight exemptions for manure haulers. WCHA would like to see an end to the continual exemptions for oversize and overweight vehicles. Emmer provided a short presentation on the oversize/overweight vehicle issue (see attachment).

Emmer noted that people are starting to recognize the scope and serious nature of oversize and overweight vehicles. Walt said there are many blatant violators who overfill trucks. Emmer added that there have been publications by the UW-Transportation Information Center on this issue as well.

In regard to a question by Gene, Emmer said that triaxles help if the truckers don't increase the load in response to additional truck axles. He noted that rutting is typically an indication of overweight trucks.

Closing Business

Potential items for the September agenda:

- Dave W. asked about an update on the *Connections 2030* project. Mary said that the plan is currently on hold pending passage of the budget, but a September update might be appropriate. She also noted that the LRSC Infrastructure Management Committee was charged with tracking progress on *Connections 2030*. She also noted that Bill Handlos has informed her that he is no longer able to participate on the committee.

- Don asked about the timeframe for starting future meetings given that many members of the council left the meeting early.
- Budget update
- Summary of the STP/Urban, STP/Rural and Local Bridge program cycles
- Committee reports, including communication activities such as pavement ratings and lack of reaching some entities
- Update on the Secretary's Committee on Local Program Streamlining

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

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